

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (currently amended) A method for providing a precured innerliner (50) for a pneumatic tire assembly (94), said pneumatic tire assembly being built on an associated tire building drum (48) and subsequently mounted into an associated shaping and vulcanizing mold (90), the method including the steps of providing ~~calendering~~ calendering means (10) for forming a continuous strip of elastomeric material and ~~curing means (38)~~ a press (40), comprising a press platen (80) for curing said continuous strip, said ~~calendering~~ calendering means being able to form said continuous strip of elastomeric material having a predetermined cross sectional profile, the method characterized by the steps of:

utilizing said ~~calendering~~ calendering means to provide said continuous strip (12) of elastomeric material having a cross-sectional profile (66) including a center region (70) bounded by first and second lateral regions (72,74), said center region having a maximum thickness T_1 at least twice a minimum thickness T_2 of said first lateral region; providing said press platen with a pressing surface mating with a profiled surface (62) of said continuous strip (12);

utilizing said ~~curing means~~ press to in-line cure a predetermined portion of said continuous strip of elastomeric material by engaging said press platen with said predetermined portion of said continuous strip to preserve said cross-sectional profile, said predetermined portion having a length equal to or greater than a circumference of said associated tire building drum;

winding said predetermined portion onto said associated tire building drum after said step of utilizing said curing means;

cutting said predetermined portion to provide splice surfaces (58,60) after said step of utilizing said curing means; and,

forming said precured innerliner (50) by joining said splice surfaces.

Claim 2. (Canceled)

Claim 3. (Original) The method of claim 1 further characterized by the step of:

winding said predetermined portion onto a holding roll before said step of winding said predetermined portion onto said associated tire building drum.

Claim 4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said splice surfaces have a splice angle of at least 80°.

Claim 5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said splice surfaces are joined with an adhesive.

Claim 6. (Canceled)

Claim 7. (Canceled)

Claim 8. (Canceled)

Claim 9. (Canceled)

Claim 10. (currently amended) A method for providing a precured innerliner (50) for a pneumatic tire assembly (94), said pneumatic tire assembly being built on an associated tire building drum (48) and subsequently mounted into an associated shaping and vulcanizing mold (90), the method including providing calendaring calendering means (10) for forming a continuous strip of elastomeric material having a predetermined cross-sectional profile, the method comprising the steps of:

utilizing said calendaring calendering means to provide said continuous strip (12) of elastomeric material having a profiled surface (62) and a cross-sectional profile (66) including a center region (70) bounded by first and second lateral regions (72,74), said center region having a maximum thickness T_1 greater than a at least twice a minimum thickness T_2 of said first lateral region;

providing a press with a pressing surface (82) which mates with said profiled surface; and,

utilizing said press to in-line cure a predetermined portion of said continuous strip of elastomeric material and preserve said cross-sectional profile by engaging said pressing surface with said predetermined portion, said predetermined portion having a length equal to or greater than a circumference of said associated tire building drum.